Miles

A history of early railroading in Winona County

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In Winona County

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PREFACE

The following is a history of the early days of railroads in Winona County.

In writing a history or a sketch dealing with the past of any kind, one is always confronted with the problems of many versions of any event. These versions vary greatly, not only as to the people interested, but at times as to the day of the month and, on occasions, as to the year.

No doubt the following version will differ somewhat from the views held by others but the following are the events that occurred and were gathered from histories from the State Historical Library, from our own Winona Library, from a book "Yesterday and Today" by Marvin Hughitt, Jr., and from the records of the old settlers' scrap books which were so kindly loaned to us by Mr. and Mrs. H. M. Johnson of the Old Settlers Society, and from information so kindly given and sent to me, especially after Gretchen Lamberton's appeal for assistance in her column.

In the following it will be noted that most of the history deals with the Winona and St. Peter Railroad and the Chicago and North Western Railroad. This is due to the fact that Winona was the location of the Winona and St. Peter general offices; and its shops, which included both car and locomotive, construction and repairing facilities, furnished employment to hundreds of men and was a vital factor in the economic life of Winona and the surrounding area.

It is often felt by many that our so-called capital or heavy industries, such as foundries or steel plants, were the hardest and most hazardous of industrial work, but, in my opinion, working on the railroad in the early days of railroading was the hardest and most dangerous of all occupations and this brief history is dedicated to the hardy men of yesteryear who gave not only their minds and bodies but often their lives in order to make it possible for us to enjoy life as we know it today.

R. E. Miles
Division Freight & Passenger Agent

April 18, 1958

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Since time immemorial mankind has always been confronted with the problem of transportation and for countless centuries very few changes were made.

The first methods used were either by floating cargoes on water or carrying on one's back, or balanced on one's head. The next phase was the training of animals to either carry goods on their backs, drag them behind on a sled-like contraption, or on poles attached to their sides.

These methods were very primitive but the first real change in transportation,and perhaps the greatest benefit that has ever happened to mankind,was the invention of the wheel. The first wheels were made by the simple process of sawing a section out of a log the thickness desired, making a hole in the center in order for it to revolve around the pole or a rounded piece of wood on what is known today as an axle.

It is true that by our present day standards the above would be laughed at, but it made life easier and better for the people then and opened new channels of commerce. No doubt most of you will see the new Cinerama movie, "Search for Paradise" and in this picture you will see things from a far off foreign land,that by our present-day standard of living are far from desirable, in which primitive methods of transportation are still used over a road that no one knows how old and which was a principal artery of trade - the road that some historians say was the one used by one of the three Wise Men following the Star to Bethlehem,bringing precious gifts to place at the feet of the newborn Jesus.

The urge to secure better means of transportation has always surged through the veins of mankind and it was this same urge that was felt by the early settlers of a century ago when Minnesota was still an infant territory.

The first known description of the Hiawatha Valley in which Winona is located was written in 1805 by Lieutenant Zebulon Pike who led 20 American soldiers on an exploration party throughout the Wabasha Prairie and bluff area. Lieutenant Pike wrote a piece which has a familiar ring 153 years later:

"We behold a most sublime and beautiful panorama; on our right we see the high bluffs and the ridge back of them, mountains of the prairie, LaCrosse, appearing like clouds in the distance; on our left and under our feet the Mississippi Valley, through which the river winds itself by numerous channels, forming many beautiful islands, as far as the eye can embrace the scene. It is altogether so variegated and romantic that man may scarcely expect to enjoy such a scene but twice or thrice during the course of his life."

Lt. Pike came up the river in four sailboats to make treaties with the Indians.

On April 1, 1852, Capt. Orrin Smith and his steamer Nominee arrived at Winona with provisons and supplies for the few settlers then living here. He brought some lumber for Erwin H. Johnson to build a new home on the levee facing Front Street. He built a one story house 16x24 feet in size with a leanto on the east side about 10x12 feet in size, plastered and shingled. It was located on Lot 4 in Block 10 of the original plat to Winona. It was on the site of the present North Western freight depot and was used as a hotel that summer for settlers.

Edward Ely arrived on Capt. Smith's steamer Nominee May 4, 1852. There were only two houses in Winona at that time so he left his family at LaCrosse until he could build a house of his own. He lived first in Irwin H. Johnson's new home on Front Street in Block 10 of the original plat of Winona. It was located on the site of the present freight depot of the Chicago & North Western Railway Company. He was Winona's first Postmaster and carried the mail in his big beaver hat.

Coming from the east at first meant traveling over the Great Lakes by way of Buffalo, New York,to Green Bay then up the Fox River to the Wisconsin River, down that river to Prairie du Chien, and then up the Mississippi to this area.

In June 1852 Capt. Orrin Smith brought John Ball, a deputy U. S. surveyor, to Winona to survey and plat the original plat to Winona owned by him and Erwin H. Johnson. Mr. Ball got his starting lines from U. S. survey posts and markers on the Wisconsin side of the river. Mr. Ball placed a large round stone weighing about 100 lbs. at the intersection of Second and Center Streets as a marker for his survey and for future surveys and measurements. The stone was placed two feet deep in Mr. Johnson's potato patch which extended back to Second Street. Mr. Smith had the public landing or levee reserved forever in the original plat as a public levee, now known as Levee Park. Later in the summer the big 100 lb. stone was removed to make way for the town pump placed in the same spot. When Winona citizens of today have occasion to pass or drive up or down Second and Center Streets, let them pause and visualize the center of said streets as a spot in Erwin H. Johnson's potato patch where the 100 pound stone marker, and later the town pump, were located in those old pioneer days of 1852.

Winona was also a thriving Trade Center and soon became an important landing point for steamboats and once more the need for better transportation was felt and the settlers, with the restless blood of a hearty pioneering people flowing through their veins, began to think of a railroad that would push westward and open the fertile land to settlement, farming,and commerce - for by now Minnesota was a territory and hoped before long to be a state.

Mr. Frank Donahue of St. Charles, Minnesota, writes that he has heard his parents recall the days when as many as 300 immigrant wagons passed through on their way to the west.

There were arrangements for a surveying team composed of Mr. Robert Pike, Mr. Isaac M. Noracong and Mr. William Stevens to make a survey for a possible location of a railroad.

People began to talk of a railroad in earnest. On March 3, 1855, the Territory of Minnesota incorporated the Transit Railroad Company, authorizing it to build a road from Winona to a point somewhere on the Minnesota River. This project failed, however, when the backers of the railroad company were unable to obtain sufficient financial aid.

On March 3, 1857 Congress granted to the Territory of Minnesota lands amounting to 4,500,000 acres for the construction of a system of Railroad Corporations, granting to four railroad corporations alternate sections, designated by odd numbers, six miles in width on each side of the roads and their branches. These railroads were the Minnesota & Pacific, The Transit, the Root River and Southern Minnesota, and the Minneapolis & Cedar Valley. They became known as the land grant roads.

The word land grant will be mentioned several times and by the word land grants we mean that this was the land given to the railroads by the government in order to encourage people and others to invest in securities to furnish money for the building of the railroads; however, it is seldom mentioned that this was a gift in part only, for when a railroad accepted these grants of land they in turn signed contracts whereby many and all shipments by or for the U. S. government would be carried over the portion of the railroad which was given acreage by the government at one-half the cost of the current freight rates.

This was in effect until October of 1946 when by an Act of Congress these contracts were nullified. One can readily see, especially since two major wars had occurred during the period of time when the land grant rates were in effect, that our government was in reality paid many thousands of times over what the land given to the railroads was worth.

Two of these railroads had Winona as a projected terminal point. The Transit Road was designed to run west from Winona to St. Peter and points beyond. A charter was obtained from the legislature March 4, 1954 by Orrin Smith, Henry D. Huff, Abram M. Fridley, Lorenzo D. Smith, John L. Balcombe, Alexander Ramsey, W. A. Gorman, Henry H. Sibley, J. Travis Rosser, Andrew G. Chatfield, Henry McKenty, O. M. Lord, Samuel Humbertson, Martin McLeod, Benjamin Thompson, Wm. H. Newton, James Hann, G. Addison Brown and Robert Helm, under the name and style of the Transit Railroad Company. The people were anxious to have a railroad and the sale of stock began in earnest.

A poem was written and published to help the sale:

Winona's Cup of Glory Full
Books of the Company Opened
$500,000 subscribed by Winonans the first week

Ho! settlers on the western plains hó! Southrons,
one and all,
Come put your shoulders to the wheel, come roll
along the ball;
Your better interests and ours, in this are all the
same,
Come help to lay the corner-stone of Minnesota's
fame;
Come dwellers in the distant West, come from
the Great South Bend,
LeSueur, and Rice, and Goodhue men, I bid you
all attend;
Come from the beautiful Blue Earth, from Olmstead,
Dodge and Steele,
And let the Transit Railroad now your mutual
influence feel;
Come from Whitewater's fertile vales, from clear,
sweet Rollingstone,
Come aid us in this glorious work;we would not
be alone;
Come Stockton, Rochester, St. Charles, let each
inscribe his name
Upon the Transit Railroad books, for that is
lasting fame.
Wake up, St. Peter! or we swear by good St. Paul
you'll rue
Your lengthy slumber if you fail to push this
matter through;
Bring down your Scott and Sibley men, Dacotah's
Carber's all,
Bring all your stanchest yeomanry, and roll along
the ball,
Ho! Andrew Jackson, "blow your horn" and send
your courier through
To rouse Mankato and the men of fair Traverse des Sioux;
For ere five summers more have flown, this sight
you're bound to see -
Folks dining here and reaching you in time for
early tea.

On Tuesday, March 18, the sale of stock began and $500,000 was subscribed by the City of Winona and surrounding areas. Henry D. Huff, L. D. Smith and H. H. Johnson helped organize this company. H. H. Johnson was its first president. These men were charter members of the old Transit Railroad now the Winona and St. Peter. Mr. Edward Slade Smith invested largely in an attempt to build the road by obtaining Congressional and state aid.

After a very large personal expenditure of money by his brother, Mr. Smith and his associates, Congress on March 3, 1857 passed an act by which the Transit Railroad was to receive through the state 1,200,000 acres of land to aid them in constructing the road. In 1858 the legislature, at its first session - afterward confirmed by the people of Minnesota - authorized a loan of $5,000,000 to aid in general construction of railroads and after an amendment of its charter and change of its name ground was broken on the line of the Transit road on June 9, 1858 near the present machine shops. The work was pushed with vigor by the contractors, DeGraff & Co., and $500,000 of state bonds had been received by them when the financial crash of 1858-59 came and all work was suspended.

This financial crash had disastrous effects on the Winona area and there was no money to be had. The only bank was that of Taylor Bennett and Company and it was unable to assist in any manner. The merchants of Winona issued scrip in order to conduct business and an article from the Old Settlers' Book is as follows:

"A gentleman by the name of Lawrence Dressendorfer, who lived on a farm about a mile south of Fountain City, sold a yoke of white oxen to Mr.Schuler, who lived about three miles above Winona on the Wisconsin side, and who operated the Castle Rock Brewery. Mrs. Schuler owned a truck garden and raised vegetables which she gathered in the morning and transported by canoe to Winona. There she distributed them among her customers, in payment of which she received scrip money.

"On a Sunday morning a few weeks after Mr. Schuler had purchased the oxen, he came to Mr. Dressendorfer's home, accompanied by his wife carrying a homemade bushel basket covered with a sheet. This basket contained eighty dollars work of scrip money, ranging in value from five to twenty-five cents. This scrip money had been issued by Winona merchants. The five cents value scrip was about two to three inches in size and the remaining values varied in size about one-half an inch,according to their values. Each merchant had his own color and design. This scrip money could not be hoardedas money is today because the value of it depended upon the stability of business of the merchant who issued it. Therefore, this gentleman carefully sorted out the scrip according to the merchants who issued it, then planned a list of needed supplies and clothing and early the next morning made a trip to Winona by canoe to exchange this scrip for the necessary supplies."

Mrs. Smith, known as Winona's beloved Aunt Catherine, gave room and board to the employees of the Transit Railroad and was given an order for $40.00. For twenty years she kept the order, unable to cash it. She finally decided to use it as a ticket on the railroad. The station agent refused to accept it, but referred her to General Sprague, Division Superintendent. He cashed the order and many times after that the Smith family took rides with the General and his family on the railroad pay car.

On March 30, 1859, The Daily Republican advised: "The affairs of this railroad are encouraging. The difficulties which existed have been adjusted. We are reliably informed that bonds have been received from the state to the amount of $500,000. Col. DeGraff has gone east to realize the cash on the bonds and there is good reason to believe that the money will shortly be forthcoming to pay off all indebtedness on the part of the company and contractors. It seems as though the good times we have so long been looking for are close at hand. Our merchants may now fill the warehouses, confidently expecting good prices and ready sales for their produce. The completion of this road to Rochester or to a point of junction with the Cedar Valley Road will benefit Winona in many ways. It will make Winona the center of wholesale trade which is now divided among all the towns between Dubuque and St. Paul. Winona in a few years will be a large city."

It developed that this would not be the case for a while. An upswing in business was being experienced, but money was yet very scarce and Col. DeGraff was unable to realize any cash on his trip east and it was impossible for the little railroad company to pay the interest on its bonds. It went into bankruptcy and on May 22, 1860 it was sold at auction and was bought by the State of Minnesota; thus it became a state railroad.

The State of Minnesota had no desire nor the funds to build and operate a railroad, so during the year of 1861 the legislature, by an act, granted and transferred all rights and interests held by the state to Orville Clark, Abraham Wing, John W. Kirk, Robert Higham, W. H. Smith, Nelson P. Stewart, B. W. Perkins (B. F. Perkins now residing in Winona is a decendent) and by this act incorporated the Winona, St. Peter and Missouri River Railroad.

The new corporation made no headway in building the railroad and as a result the state legislature on March 10, 1862 transferred all rights to a group of men who founded a new company and named it the Winona and St. Peter Railroad. Minnesota's first railroad, a stretch of ten miles, connected St. Paul with Minneapolis, and was known as the St. Anthony Railroad. Thus the Winona and St. Peter Railroad became the second railroad in the State of Minnesota and the first in Winona.

Directors of the new company were Wm. Lamb, S. S. L'Hommedieu, J. W. Kirk, Herman Gebhart and H. C. Stimson. Minnesota granted land to the new company and other investors became interested. D. N. Barney & Co. advanced money to build the railroad westward from Winona. The first officers were: D. Barney, President; Angus Smith, General Manager; H. C. Atkins, Supt.; H. W. Lamberton, Land Commissioner; A. J. Mead, Freight & Passenger Agent; W. M. Hurtbert, Master Mechanic; John McCleary, Roadmaster. First train crews: Hy Tea, Conductor; James Tremain, Conductor; George Shannon, Conductor; William G. Vanbuskirk, Locomotive Engineer; Boney Sisco, Locomotive Engineer; John Mosher, Locomotive Engineer. Exact information concerning other first employees cannot be obtained as old records were destroyed by fire during the 1880's. Name of the first engine was "Old Tiger".

On December 9, 1862, a passenger train was run by Col. DeGraff from Winona to Stockton, Minnesota and return. Mrs. G. W. Norris, the mother of Dr. Frank Norris, a dentist in Winona for many years, was one of the first passengers. On December 10, 1862, the first carload of wheat was shipped by Mr. L. Raymond of Stockton to Asa Forsyth, Winona.

Offices of the new company were located in the Riverside Hotel, located at Lafayette Street and the levee. This hotel at the time of its erection was regarded as the finest building in southern Minnesota. It was financed by the Bank of Taylor Bennett & Co. and built by L. D. Smith & Co. at a cost of $6,500.00 and was destroyed by fire May 1, 1876.

Mr. G. F. Krumdick recalls that the present railroad station was built in 1882-83. The old station that was located at the foot of Winona St., operated jointly by the C&NW and the GB&W, had extensive dockage that was a combination depot and steamboat wharf along the river. The passenger the freight trains operated from this dockage - the docks were also busy shipping centers. The largest boat lines that used them were the Diamond Joe Line and the Davidson Lines. It was also a favorite spot for the young lads to gather when a boat loaded with watermelons arrived, for if some boy was lucky enough to have a nickel, a kind hearted negro doing the unloading would always accidantly drop one or two melons and a grand feast was had by all.

At the west end of the docks there was a small cove where the current was slow and this was the old swimming hole where the boys, clad in their birthday clothes, swam and splashed around as only boys can do.

Once construction of the railroad started it proceeded rapidly. In 1864 the trains reached Rochester, a distance of fifty miles from Winona. In 1865 the road was completed sixty-six miles to Kasson; in 1866, 90 miles to Owatonna; in 1868, 106 miles to Waseca; in 1870, 139 miles to Mankato and St. Peter; in 1871, 165 miles to New Ulm; in 1872, 284 miles of track were completed west of Winona, and the grading extended 331 miles to Lake Kampeska in Dakota Territory. In 1879 another line, diverging from the old track at Tracy, in Lyon County, was begun and pushed with such energy that in two years trains were running to Old Fort Pierre, on the Missouri River, connecting with daily stages for the Black Hills.

The entire property, save the land grant, had, however, in November 1867, passed into the hands of the Chicago & North Western Railroad Co. and became a part of that great system, although still retaining its name and corporate existence. The lands, thus separated from the general ownership of the company and its franchises, became the property of A. H. Barney and a company of New York capitalists, excepting those since sold to settlers.

Mr. R. R. Mademann of Stockton, Minnesota, relates the following: "Stockton was once a thriving business town and one of its first industries was a combined saw mill and grist mill operated by water power and in 1867 this mill was purchased by the Mowbray Company. (Mr. Mademann does not know the name of the person or persons who first built this mill.) When the railroad came to Stockton a spur or side track was built to serve this mill. This was the first industry, outside of those in Winona, to be served by rail in the State of Minnesota. The mill burned to the ground in 1882." On May 17, 1890, Mr. Albert Mademann, father of Mr. R. R. Mademann - a man of 28 years of age - and his wife arrived in Winona on a river steamer and took the afternoon train to Stockton where they established a home. He purchased the Mowbray Mill site and built the mill that is still standing. It is still operated by water power and it was named the Stockton Roller Mill. Flour is still made there and sold under the trade name of "Stockton Buckwheat Flour" and "Stockton Self-Rising Pancake Flour", both made from an old family recipe. The first stone grinders that were used in the mill are now buried flush with the sidewalk in the mill yard and the cut grooves and other outlines in the grinders can be seen very plainly. To the writer's knowledge, this is the only mill still operated by water power in the surrounding area.

Mr. and Mrs. Austin Raymond, with seven children, came to Minnesota in 1852 when Winona had three houses. They came from New York where there were so many stones that Mr. Raymond bent his plow and had to have it sharpened and straightened almost every time that he went around his field. He came in search of good, black soil and settled where Utica is now situated. Twenty years later a railroad was built and an elevator erected. A depot was built and a town started. When the depot was nearly finished Mr. Raymond said, "When you get through put Utica on it, for I came from Utica, New York". Mr. Raymond had to come to Winona for groceries, taking two days to come with oxen. When they met a team on the bluff they had to unhitch and hold up one side of the wagon, leading one ox by at a time, for the roads were not cut down into the hill.

Mrs. G. W. Norris came to Winona with her mother in 1853. Winona was then on an island and travelers had to swim their horses over the "slough" at Sugar Loaf; also, near what is now known as the campus of St. Teresa. Mr. Norris came to Winona and began working for the Winona & St. Peter Railroad in 1866. Mr. Norris was known among his fellow workers as an engineer, not a hogger. He loved his work and his engines were like pets to him. At night during his last years in railroading he would awaken if anyone took his engine from the roundhouse. The Superintendent finally left orders that no one else was to move them. In 1879 Mrs. Norris and her husband went to Sleepy Eye and later Tracy.

Prior to the building of the railroads, travel was mostly by stage coaches. Stage coach travel in pioneer days of Winona was rough, slow and expensive, but it built up a stage system of 1,300 miles and pony express routes of 300 miles for J. C. Burbank, who died in St. Paul in 1876. Mr. Burbank operated the first routes of travel in the new country between LaCrosse and Winona and westward from the Mississippi to the Minnesota River. The first road from LaCrosse to Winona ran over the ridge on what is now known as the old territorial road, with stops near Winona at what was known as Cooper's Tavern and Witoka, known at that time as old Centerville.

It was during the middle 1850's that Burbank stages first marked a rough road along the ridge. Stops to the westward included old Centerville, Hall's Tea Tavern, and Chatfield. In the summer months the stage company did not compete much with the steamboats for the LaCrosse to Winona business, but during the winter, when the river was frozen solid, the stages also found the river useful, going on the ice rather than on the rough ridge road. In 1867 the Winona Daily Republican issue of April 3, 1867, Mr. Dexter, Agent for the Burbank Co. in Winona, announced that the stages had run 95 days on the ice between Winona and LaCrosse, having started Dec. 27, and stopped March 31, for the longest uninterrupted period on record,up to that time, of river travel in winter. The stages ran with praiseworthy regularity and the businessmen of Winona were pleased in having the mails come regularly. The Minnesota Stage Company at this time operated ten stages from LaCrosse to Winona and carried 63 passengers daily. The fare from LaCrosse to Winona was $5.00 and this included transportation by ferry across the river to Winona.

A Division Freight and Passenger office was established in Winona and its history is as follows:

A. J. Mead - 1862 - 1866. No further record.
D. W. Keyes- 1866 - 1871. No further records.
Willet Carpenter - 1871 - 1890. Brother-in-law of Henry Huff, father of three girls: Ida, Kate and Maude. Ida was the wife of H. L. Buck, who became a very prominent judge in Winona, and whose relatives still reside in Winona. Kate married Geo. J. Hillyer of Winona, whose first wife, the mother of Helen L. and Willard Hillyer, both now residing in Winona, died. To this union was born one son, J. C. Hillyer, not residing in Winona. Maude was a teacher in Minneapolis. The first Mrs. Hillyer died in 1889. Kate married Mr. Hillyer in 1902.

H. C. Garvin 1890 - 1899. Known to all Winonans, he later became Vice President of the Bay State Milling Company. Mrs. Garvin still resides in Minneapolis.

A. C. Johnson - 1899 - 1910, whose daughter, Alta Johnson, married the son of a Winona family, Charles McNie. They are both living and reside in Wilmette, Illinois. Mr. Johnson later became V. Pres. Traffic, C&NW Ry.

Herman Wagen - May 1, 1910 to February 21, 1932. Nothing further known.

E. J. Carland - February 1, 1932 to June 25, 1950. Mr. Carland is retired and lives on West Fourth Street, Winona.

H. Eklund - June 25, 1950 to October 1954. Transferred to Minneapolis and is residing there.

L. J. Renneberg - 1954 to 1955. Transferred to Green Bay and later to Madison, Wisconsin, and residing there at this time.

R. E. Miles - August 15, 1955

Winona was still growing in importance as a trade and shipping center. The first lumber yard in Winona was opened in May 1865 on the site of the Bay State Milling Company. It was conducted by John C. Matthew, J.C., M.J., and Wm. H. Laird.

The first sawmill opened December 17, 1855, by James Wyckoff and James Highland. The second was put into operation in September 1857 by the Laird Brothers. The third mill began its operation in October of 1857 and was owned by Earl S. and Addison Youmans.

On October 1, 1856, James L. Norton and Matthew G. Norton, cousins of the Lairds, became partners in the lumber business and the name was changed to Laird, Norton & Company. In 1857 the Laird, Norton Co. built its first mill.

In 1860 Charles Horton, Andrew Hamiltonand L. C. Porter took possession of the business and site of the Wyckoff Mill. In 1866 Porter sold his interests to his partners and the firm became Horton and Hamilton.

In January 1912 the Botsford Lumber Co. took over the Laird Norton yards. O. M. Botsford was President; J. D. McMartin, Vice President; and G. F. Streater, Secretary.

The Hayes Lucas Lumber Co. was founded by Andrew Hamilton, Charles Horton and L. C. Porter; William Hayes, President; J. W. Lucas, Vice President; J. L. Krogstead, Secretary. The high mark of lumber production in Winona was reached in 1892 when 148,000,000 feet of lumber and 18,000,000 shingles were produced. After 1897 Winona ceased to be a lumber producer.

Bubs Brewery - This firm was first established in Winona at the foot of a stone bluff. It was built in 1862 by Jacob Weisbrod. During the next few years it outgrew its productive capacity and a new brewery was built at the foot of the bluff now known as Sugar Loaf. Mr. Peter Bub, who came to Winona in 1869 and who had beer making experience in Milwaukee, became associated with Mr. Weisbrod and when Mr. Weisbrod passed away in 1870, he assumed the position of manager. In 1871 he married the widow Weisbrod and it has been operated by the Bub family ever since.

One of the early industries was the brick making companies. There was an abundance of clay in the vicinity of Winona and the largest of several in the Winona area was the Gilmore Valley Brick Co., located im a small valley just west of Winona, and the remains of this plant can be seen to this day, same having been owned by Chas. Butler.

At the close of the civil war, Philip Biesanz came to Winona and inasmuch as he was a son of a brick manufacturer and was well versed in this business, he became associated with Mr. Butler as a foreman of his construction business and laid the corner stone of the first brick building to be built in Winona, which was at the corner of Center and Front Streets and was known as the Orrin Smith & Sons Bank. This spot is now occupied by the freight office of the C&NW. The descendents of the Biesanz family now operate the stone company and it is known as the Biesanz Stone Company. Mr. Chas. P. Biesanz, son of Philip Biesanz is still living in Winona and is active in the management of the company. The stone is of unusual texture and color and has been used in the construction of many famous buildings all over the country.

Bay State Milling Co. - This firm originated in Winona in 1874 was known as the L. C. Porter Milling Co., being located at Front and Franklin Streets. Its flour was sold under the name of "Boss Flour". The mill was destroyed by fire in the 1870's but was rebuilt and used until 1889. It closed and remained idle until 1899 when it was purchased by the Rothwell Interests of Boston. Paul T. Rothwell was the President and H. C. Garvin, formerly with the C&NW in Winona as DF&PA, was the mill's first General Manager. Mr. Garvin passed away in 1941 and Mrs. Garvin now resides in Minneapolis.

The oxen teams would come into Winona through the different valleys by the hundreds. As there were not enough warehouses to take care of the grain, it was customary to spread canvas on the ground along the levee front and pile the bags of grain upon them. One year the receipts of grain in Winona were the second largest in the United States, Toledo, Ohio being the first.

The first barge of wheat into New Orleans came from Winona. The Captain of the barge was R. R. Tibbals,who lived at Dubuque.

The Huff House was built in 1855 on the corner of Third and Johnson on the present site of the Hotel Winona. However, when the Hotel Winona was to be built, the Huff House was moved east on Third and again to East Fourth Street, where it was bricked over and became the present Merchants Hotel.

John E. Blunt, Division Engineer for the Chicago and North Western Railway Co., and his family resided in the home of Mr. Windom, who left Winona to serve the United States Senate and later as Secretary of the Treasury under Garfield and again under Benjamin Harrison. Mr. Blunt, grandfather of Carleton Blunt - who married Rebecca Prentiss, a daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. S. L. Prentiss - later was transferred to Chicago.

The Windom home was sold in the late 80's to A. F. Hodgins and again about the turn of the century to W. P. Tearse, northwest lumberman, and the home remained in the Tearse family until sold to the Winona Diocese.

Mr. J. E. Blunt, son of John E. Blunt, was also in the employ of the Chicago and North Western Railway Co. as a city ticket agent at Winona. He resigned Sept. 2, 1892 and moved to Chicago. He now resides in Wilmette, Ill. and has offices in Chicago.

Mr. Allen M. Davis and wife settled in Winona in the spring of 1856 and settled on a farm about one and one-half miles south of Stockton and he helped build the first wagon road over the "big ridge" between Winona and Stockton. During the winter months of 1862 he cut cord wood, a cord being 4 feet wide, 4 feet high and 8 feet long, and hauled the wood with a team of oxen to the brow of the bluff and chuted it to the bottom on a wooden chute he had constructed, where it was loaded on engine tenders. He received $2.50 per cord for the wood delivered on the tender.

Mr. C. W. Davis, son of Mr. A. M. Davis, and father of Marion Davis,now residing in Winona, was employed by the C&NW as a fireman and fired a Hill engine as his first job. He soon was a member of a regular crew that worked on the road, the crew being known as a chain gang - meaning that the first crew in was the first crew ordered out after eight hours rest. A crew consisted of an engineer, fireman, conductor and two brakemen. This was a happy but rugged life. On a run to Waseca from Winona Mr. Davis would shovel from seven to twenty-one tons of coal depending on the weather conditions and time of year. In the winter time this was a doubly rugged life when he would freeze on one side and burn up on the other, as this was in the days before stokers and the coal was shoveled from the tender to the firebox; and prior to the "butterfly" type of fire door, the door, hand operated to the firebox, was open almost all of the time.

The writer knows full well what a back breaking job the firing of an engine means, for in the early 1920's when attending college he and others would take their examinations two weeks early and would "hit the wheat fields" of northern Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas in order to earn money for the following year's tuition. Being broke, all would ride the side door Pullmans - in reality empty box cars of a freight train - in order to get to their destinations.

It was a common practice by the fireman to have the brakeman go over the train and shanghai anybody bumming their way and drag them to the engine. They would take turns with the fireman, or if enough were found, do all the shoveling of coal into the fire box. These were a very large type of locomotives called a "mogul" by the Santa Fe and the tenders held 50 tons of coal.

As Mr. Davis relates in his diary, these were the days of glamorous railroading; the days of 60 miles an hour were theoretical and the 100 miles per hour was only a dream.

It stands to reason that for a railroad to be successful, there must be industry in order to have tonnage to haul and Winona was expanding as a manufacturing center.

Lumber was the first major industry of Winona. In 1866 the Winona and St. Peter Railroad advertised in Winona directories as follows: Direct connections are made at Winona with steamboats on the Mississippi River, with stages at St. Charles for Chatfield; at Rochester for Austin and Southern Minnesota; and Owatonna for St. Peter, Mankato and all points on the Minnesota River. In 1870 railroads boasted twenty-four hour service between St. Paul and Chicago - you were lucky if the train made it in thirty hours. The trip was made by leaving St. Paul at 8:30 A.M. on the Minnesota Iowa Railroad to Owatonna, arriving at noon, then over the Winona & St. PeterRailroad to Winona, then by boat to LaCrosse and from LaCrosse to Chicago by train.

In the meantime, railroads were not faring too well financially. This was due to the fact that so many small lines had been built. By this I mean small lines to inland towns often built on account of civic pride, rather than economic necessity, and they were often a hardship to the major lines. This situation, along with the high operating cost on account of Stockton Hill, was the reason that the Winona and St. Peter Railroad, when an opportunity presented itself, sold their rights, except their land grants, which amounted to 1,678,804 acres, to the Chicago and North Western Railroad on October 31, 1867. This railroad also acquired the charter of the LaCrosse, Trempealeau & Prescott Railroad and early in 1870 this road was completed to a point across the river from Winona.

At this time the railroad started its building program in earnest. A roundhouse was built around the early 70's, then followed the shops, etc. The ten acres where the shops now stand was once covered by Indian graves and the pole scaffoldings erected to hold the bodies of the dead. The claim on which the shops now stand sold for $80.00. The Indian village was known as the Wabasha's Keox-ah. In fact, one could buy almost the whole prairie for $200.00.

On April 14, 1870, the Mississippi was from two to three miles wide at Winona. The river began coming up at the rate of five, six, seven inches and even more almost every day in the latter part of March that year and it was April 20 before it started to go down.

That was the year that Orrin Fruit Smith, then around eight years old, rode on a steamer from the levee to the North Western yards. The North Western depot, which stood then at the foot of Winona Street, was a combination railroad depot and dock and was cut off from the west part of town by high water and by a break in the North Western tracks at Youmans mill near the roundhouse.

A cargo of heavy freight had come up the river to be sent on by rail and they couldn't get a train down to the dock to load it, so the steamer sailed right up to the round house.

The vehicular bridge of 1942 over the river crossed directly over the site of the Winona and St. Peter Railway Co. depot and steamboat wharf of pioneer days.

With the new financial aid and the land grants, the railroad was able to lay 50 miles of track from Winona to Rochester in 1864. By 1871 the railroad reach St. Peter, 140 miles away,and crossed the Minnesota River at that point, for at this time there was no station at Mankato.

The purchase by the Chicago & North Western was of rights only and the road continued to operate under the name of Winona & St. Peter. It has already been related that the travel between St. Paul and Chicago was a combination of travel by rail then transfer to a river boat and back to the rails again, which was not a feasible or economic means of transportation and it was felt that soon another method must be devised.

The eyes of the Engineering Department turned towards the river and it was evident that this barrier must be spanned; thus the efforts and minds were directed toward this problem. It was decided that inasmuch as the railroads - one that ended at the river banks on one side and one that began on the opposite bank - were owned by the same parent company, that a bridge was the answer to the problem.

The first bridge was built across the Mississippi River in the year 1871. James T. Robb, Sr. in his youth, before he went into merchandising, was a member of the crew which constructed the Chicago & North Western Railway bridge during 1870 and 1871. When it was practically completed,on May 26 the first train passed over it safely.

On Saturday, May 27, Fred Perkins - who related this incident - in tow of Conductor Palmatier and his young son, a friend of Fred Perkins, rode to Stockton Hill in the morning for a load of three or four cars of rip-rap timber and then crossed the new railroad bridge on a trip to Van Gorder's quarry in the Wisconsin bluffs to get six flat cars of stone. Fred was sitting on the hand brake at the front of the engine tender or tank, Bruce near him, when the load started back over the trestle. It was just noon when the little, heavily loaded train approached the draw part of the bridge which was swung open to permit boats to pass, and the bridge tender was on his way down a ladder to get into a skiff and go home for his noon lunch.

"They didn't run railways on such strict schedules then", said Fred, "and the tender would not come back to close the draw, so we could not get over. We had to wait until he got back at one o'clock. Then the draw was swung back in a hurry for the impatient trainman, and was not coupled right, so the north end was an inch or so lower than the south end of the draw. Before the engine, tender and six flats got across the draw and on to the fixed pier, the bridge began to crack. Bill Huxley, the Engineer, had his engine nearly onto the pier and when he saw what was happening he gave the engine full throttle ahead. The jerk and the weight of the falling flats loaded with stone broke the coupling and chains connecting the tender with the engine. The engine made the pier but the rest of the train crashed into the river.

"Jack McElligott, fireman, grabbed Bruce by the shoulder and yanked him off the tender just in time. The next I remembered was choking with water and fighting to get my head up. The river was high and at flood stage and it was full of floating timbers. I was a strong swimmer, but whenever I tried to get my head above the water I was stopped by timbers. I could see the sunlight shining pale yellow through the water, but it was a long time before I was clear. When we got to shore everyone was looking at me and I soon learned the reason why. The open place where I came up had been covered with a spread of bright red bridge paint, which had gone into the river and my head was all red as though covered with blood."

J. H. Stewart, Superintendent of the Winona & St. Peter Road was among the crowd waiting when Fred and the bridge tender made shore. The engine hauling the flats that day was Engine No. 2, named the J. H. Stewart, in honor of the Superintendent. It was a brightly painted and gay locomotive and ordinarily was used only to haul the superintendent's car or take the payroll over the system.

After the collapse of the bridge, the tender and flat cars were salvaged from the east side of the bridge and reconstruction of the bridge started at once. The new bridge, of iron construction, was built during the winter of 1871 and the draw span of the new bridge, said to be one of the longest that had ever been built (363 feet), was considered one of the greatest feats up to this time. It was put into operation and opened to engineering traffic on January 16, 1872.

When the first bridge was constructed, the draw was swung by a steam power; but sixty years ago the steam engine was replaced by a gasoline engine which was replaced eleven years ago by an electric motor. Sixty years ago gasoline engines were just being placed on the market and were not very dependable as a power unit. The rafting business then being at its height, the draw had to be swung frequently and the pilots did not rely on the change from steam to gasoline. They feared that a gasoline engine might fail them while approaching the bridge with a heavy raft of logs or lumber, but that gasoline engine did wonderful work during the sixty seasons it was on the job.

Around this time the channel spread out in the full width of the river, with barely enough water going through the draw for safe navigation. To remedy that condition and to divert the water through the drawpans and also to create a narrower and deeper channel, the U. S. engineers built a long wing dam above the bridge. That dam extended from Latch Island to come in line with the entrance to the drawbridge and to force water through the draw. That dam was one of the first wing dams built in this vicinity and that was when the circus began.

The wing dam created quite an eddy below it, and when that eddy met the swift current coming around the channel end of that dam, it created a large whirlpool, which proved a nightmare to the pilots. The whirlpool was so strong that it sucked logs from under the booms; the logs would entirely disappear and then come bobbing up again like a cork standing on end.

The whirlpool also sucked under entire cribs of lumber, which were 16 x 32 feet in size, so that the deck load of lath and shingles floated off. That was a picnic for the youngsters, who salvaged that material below the bridge, which meant spending money for the kids.

The Percy Swain, towing a barge of merchandise, hit the whirlpool; the barge capsized, the cargo was lost. To overcome the whirlpool, the U. S. engineers shortened the dam and built a series of wing dams above it, extending upriver to about what is now called Jag Island on the Wisconsin side. As time went on, sand was pumped between those dams and they are now covered with crops of willows.

There was only one other whirlpool of that magnitude along the Upper Mississippi, and that was where the water of the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers met below Prairie du Chien in Wisconsin and Clayton, Iowa.

The steamer Dubuque, with 200 passengers aboard, hit one of the bridge piers, due to high winds and cross currents, sprung a leak, and sank in shoal water on what is now known as the bathing beach. The steamer, Musser, came to its aid and removed the passengers. No lives were lost.

On October 25, 1870, the mayor and the alderman were guests of the Winona, Mankato and New Ulm Railroad on the formal opening trip from Winona to Mankato.

Once again this new and struggling railroad and the young state were dealt a staggering blow - this was not a financial impact but one far more severe - one from the elements that was almost a tragedy for both.

The winter of 1880 - 1881 is known as the year of the big snow. H. C. Garvin was then 18 and a telegraph operator for the Winona & St. Peter Railroad at New Ulm, Minnesota. S. M. Gage was a conductor in freight service.

During the night of October 15, 1880, it began to snow and that storm scarcely ceased until May 5, 1881. Such a storm was quite unprecedented in the northwest. Thousands of settlers had in the summer and fall of 1880 flocked to Minnesota and Dakota and settled along the lines of the railroad. Everyone of them were dependent upon the trains of this company for food, fuel and light. They had no accumulated stores to draw from. Hence it was absolutely necessary for the railroad to keep its lines open. The snow plows were kept moving day and night and thousands of men were hired to shovel snow. It is said that over fourteen feet of snow fell on the level in central Minnesota and what is now South Dakota.

The snow storms were accompanied with high winds and the storms were really blizzards. In many places the cuts made by snow plows and shovelers were from twenty to forty feet deep, so that there often had to be six or seven ranks of shovelers, one above the other in a terrace formation, in order to move the snow above the tracks and far enough back to keep it rolling down into the cuts again.

In March 1881, one snow storm brought a full four feet on the level and the last snow storm, equally as great, occurred May 5, 1881. Literally hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent in paying for shoveling snow in these six months and when spring came nothing was to be seen for it. Though many had to live on wheat or corn ground in coffee mills, or pounded in a mortar, none were allowed to starve, and when May came all were ready for the work that should have begun in February or March. Had the railroad failed in this tremendous undertaking and many of the settlers perished, the development of this area might have been considerably retarded. Few of us realize today how vitally important our railroads have always been and still are. Even though they may not reach destinations as quickly as we desire, they do reach there regardless of the elements. Surely one cannot help but realize what a very important part the Chicago & North Western played in the settling of Western Minnesota and Dakota.

Mrs. G. W. Norris lived at Sleepy Eye during the winter of 1881 and saw enough snow, she states, to last her a life time. Mr. Norris was on a road job and sometimes was snowed in for weeks at a time. They coupled from three to five engines on his train occasionally to get it out of the drifts. Big blocks of snow would be cut from the drifts and they put chains around them and hauled them out with an engine. Mrs. Norris says I know it sounds like a yarn but it's a fact that for weeks at a time I could not see the one story houses of the neighbors. The put two by fours on top of the drifts to raise the telegraph wires out of the snow.

As told by Mr. S. Sanborn then Supt. of W. & St. P. R. R., large herds of antelope wanted to go south, across the tracks into Ree Hills for protection, but, the track not being blasted, the new ties were exposed and they were afraid to cross. The next Spring there were none to be found; they either fled before advancing civilization or the cold and snow of that winter killed them. This happened in the Dakotas. They had to burn old bridge material they found piled up at bridges that had been renewed the season before and tore down and burned snow fences. For water they shoveled snow into the engine tanks. During the fall of 1880 the Railway Co. put in large amounts of fuel at the various stations which the settlers might have if they could reach the stations, but they did not know what there might be for food. There was much complaint, and one sensational report was published of a whole family's perishing of cold and hunger. So far, as is known there were no deaths and few cases of actual suffering.

Mose Gage, father of Mrs. Clinton Poss, who very kindly loaned articles on this storm so this information was obtainable, advised that bucking snow was no snap in the old days with the aid of a snow king (a flat car equipped with a snow plow and the car weighted down with iron, etc.) He remembered Supt. Sanborn asking Roadmaster, John Burke, how many snow drifts there were between Tracy and a town west. John asnwered "Just one drift sir, 47 miles long and from 8 to 25 feet high. The last time we opened Coal Minecut west of Springfield the snow in the cut was forty-two feet from the top of the rails to the top of the cut.

I left Sleepy Eye on February 12, with orders to open the road through to Watertown. We got as far west as Goodwin, S. D. and when we got back as far as Canby, this was in the spring of 1881, there was high water everywhere and all of the bridges were washed out. I did not get back home to Sleepy Eye until May 13. This was the hardest winter I ever put in in railroading."

The writer and his wife, having spent a great deal of our lives among railroad people, feel they are just special folks, warm, friendly and kind. We know of no better way to describe our feelings than in a few incidents that I will relate regarding Mr. Moses' experience as a railroader. I would have liked very much to have known this gentleman, for he certainly must have been a fine person. I now quote him.

" The life of a railway man is not a path of roses by a long ways, but do you know in my long years of service I have made a few friends worth while? I have always found it better to give a man a smile, and how's your health, then to give him a kick or a frown. I remember one time in particular of an instance of a woman and several children being on the train running west from Mankato. The children kept crying continually. They did not look like cross children, so I asked the mother what was the matter with the kids. 'To be honest with you, Mr. Conductor', the lady said, 'they are crying for something to eat.' "Do not tell me that the children are hungry", said I. She assured me this was the case. She had left home with sufficient money to make the trip through. Washouts had occurred enroute and she used all of her money. You can bet that I telegraphed to Tracy and told them to have four or five lunches ready. Do you know I never had anything do me so much good as to see those children and that mother eat? That was Saturday, and the woman and kids had to be cared for until Monday. I took them over to Mrs. Levetts in Tracy, and asked her how much it would cost to keep them over Sunday. I paid the bill. The lady wanted to know my name so that she could send back the money when she reached home. I told her to forget the money, but that if she was a praying woman to not forget the conducter in her prayers in future years, so that his run over the road might be safely made."

Another incident: "An old woman came to me in a South Dakota town and asked me if I could break the rules and aid her to reach a town in Wisconsin, where she had a daughter who would care for her. She had been living with a daughter in South Dakota, but she had just passed away and left the old lady friendless and alone. She produced an old stocking from beneath her faded shawl and said that in this she had all the money she possessed in the world. I emptied the contents of the stocking out, and found that it contained just twelve dollars. It took twenty dollars to buy a ticket to the town she wanted to reach in Wisconsin. I took every penny she had and dug down in my own pocket for the balance. Then I was in a quandry for the old lady had nothing with which to purchase food enroute. I told the depot agent that he would have to dig up a quarter.

Some one heard me talking to the agent and soon after the train started some one suggested that I get in the end of the smoking car and make a speech telling of the predicament of the old lady. I knew it was against the rules to solicit on the train but thinking that it was good cause I made the speech and then passed my cap.

I met with such success in the smoker that I went through the entire train. Returning to the old lady I dumped the contents of my cap in her lap. She was dumbfounded. I told her, the good people on the train had given it to her so that she could purchase food while on her way home to her daughter. There was not a dry eye in the car. A few moments later that aged woman knelt down in the aisle of that swaying train and prayed to God that no one of us would ever want for necessities. Sometimes I think that in all the years of my long railroad life there had been some good spirit watching over me to keep me from harm. I believe that the prayers of my friends have helped to protect me for there is a God in Heaven and he is a good God."

In all his experience as a railroad man he was in but one wreck and that was a headon collision between Courtland and New Ulm. A freight train forgot that they had the right of way and met right on a bridge. He lost his engineer, Charley Hanson, he being pinned in his engine. His first words to the conductor, "Who is the fault of this?"

The Winona and St. Peter after acquisition by the Chicago & North Western as related befo e continued to operate in its own name, and with ample funds at its disposal began the acquisition of small branch lines to inland points.

On May 11, 1881 it purchased the Minnesota Valley Railroad which was organized in 1876 -- On May 11, 1881 the Plainview Railroad which was organized May 11, 1877 — and on the same date the Dakota Central Railroad organized May 7, 1879 -- on February 2, 1900 the Winona, Mankato and New Ulm which was organized June 25, 1870 - - also on the same date the Rochester and Northern Minnesota Railroad, organized October 25, 1877 - - also at the same time purchased the Chatfield Railroad organized April 27, 1878 and on February 12, 1900 the Minnesota and South Dakota Railroad organized August 3, 1899.

Railroad train orders account being sent by telegraph or out of necessity, held to the barest minimum of words and at times these orders or communications turned out to be humorous.

Chicago and Northwestern historians found the following message which was sent in 1910 by the father of Iowa's Governor, one Mr. D. Blue, who was a locomotive engineer, to his master mechanic, one Mr. A. B. Quimby, and the exchange of messages was as follows:

"A B Q - - Engine 62 blue a flue. What shall I do? " signed D. Blue.

Mr. Quimby replied "D. Blue - - plug flue on 62 and come on through" signed A. B. Q.

Mr. J. H. Krumbeck still residing in Winona recalls that once an engine was standing on a track at the round house and in some manner by itself ran wild down through the freight yards, past the depot, down to the levee tracks, and hit some box cars. They all crashed into his father's warehouse where a clerk by the name of Ernest Ram was seated at his desk. He heard the crash and jumped to one side as the box cars came crashing through, crushing the chair he had just jumped out of. It took a wrecking gang over one half hour to tear aside the rubbish in order to release him and he never had a scratch.

The present freight offices at the foot of Center Street were built by Mr. Butler in 1880. - - A warehouse owned by Mr. G. H. Krumdick, father of G. F. Krumdick, was located on the west side of Lafayette Street & Front St. and had to be torn down to make room for the freight house and tracks.

As outlined in the beginning of our history not too much has been recorded regarding early histories of other railroads in Winona County and we will now relate their history according date and origin.

G. B. & W.

This road was first chargered under the name of "The Green Bay and Lake Pepin R. R. in 1866, and was to run from Green Bay to Wabasha. Surveying and grading was begun in 1869 and 4 miles was graded this year and another 35 miles was graded in 1870. The laying of rail began late in the year of 1871 and approximately 40 miles of rails were placed and reached the town of New London. This point was reached according to historians "Only by the skin of the railroads teeth". In order to claim the bonus of $85.00 offered by the town if they could reach it by January 1, 1870. On Jan. 4, 1872 the Greenbay and Lake Pepin Ry. Co. ran its first passenger train from Green Bay to New London, Wisconsin. Then followed the series of the road's extensions, financial troubles and reorganizations.

On Dec. 5, 1873, just a few weeks before the railroad connected with Winona, its name was changed to the Green Bay and Minnesota Railroad. Hopes were that the line would be consolidated with the Winona and St. Peter. The force behind the scenes for the consolidation was Mr. J. I. Blair of Blairstown, N. J. and New York City - - Who was an extensive holder of stock in both roads. However, the C & NW which in reality was the owner of the WSTP, had also purchased the La Crosse, Trempealeau and Prescott RR, thereby extending their service from La Crosse to the west. This left the Green Bay and Minn R. R. to its own device and this was a severe blow to the road as it was entirely dependent upon revenue derived from the lightly settled country along the line and the income was not great enough to meet the cost of operation.

The company was again reorganized and its name changed to the Green Bay and Winona and was built westward.

It was then decided that the final terminal of the road perhaps should be Winona instead of Wabasha, and officials of the road approached the city fathers of Winona and offered to build the road from Merrillan, Wisconsin to Winona, provided the city of Winona would grant them a bonus of $100,000. The city of Winona approached the legislature seeking permission to take such a step, but this failed to pass this body and the railroad then appealed to the citizens of Winona and $35,000 was subscribed and the railroad accepted this amount and began to build the line towards Winona as proposed. At a later date the legislature authorized the city to make good its agreement with the subscribers but only on the condition that an amount up to $50,000 be raised. Many legal problems arose later over the difference of $15,000 and they were finally settled when the subscribers paid the difference in order to obtain the stock that had been promised, and the name was changed to that of the Green Bay and Winona R. R.

Construction was begun west of Merrillan and passed through the Trempealeau Valley and across the Trempealeau River about 15 times. On some occasions the river would reach flood stage and cause extensive damage to the work that was being done. The greatest damage occurred in March 1876 when the entire roadbed was washed out between Arcadia and Marshland. Two months were required to relay the destroyed roadbed and on many occasions since, floods have caused extensive damage. However, the road soon reached Eastmore, a point on the Wisconsin side of the Mississippi River, near the present bridge.

Apparently the company had visions of this town becoming a great grain and flour center, but for some reason this never materialized.

On December 16 the Winona Republican published an item to the effect that the Green Bay and Winona RR would be open for business on Thursday December 18, and on this date a train would depart from Winona and would arrive at 9:10 p.m. bringing a party of some 50 businessmen from Green Bay and that accomodations had been secured at the Huff House.

On December 18 the Republican Herald again made note of the event by saying that an important event in the history of Winona and Green Bay had occurred. It further stated that the building of over 200 miles of RR without any aid from the Government or State and any other subsidies was itself in those days a remarkable event. The trains were operated over the C&NW R. R. bridge and used its combined depot and steamship wharf. At a later date it ran its trains into Winona over the bridge built for the CB&Q.

C. G. W. R.R.

In February, 1856, the Territorial legislature incorporated the Winona and La Crosse R.R. Co., and authorized it to build and operate a railroad from Winona to a point opposite La Crosse, Wisconsin. Due to financial difficulties, it was impossible to raise the necessary funds for the constructionof this railroad and it was not able to go beyond the point of being only a railroad on paper.

In the meantime a group of Winona business men recognizing the need of a transportation outlet and inlet into Winona, to theSouth and West, began to revive interest in the old Winona and La Crosse idea. They approached the Legislature and were successful in having it pass an act reviving the old charter of the W & L. C. R.R. , and February 9, 1872, it was amended to change the name to the Winona and South Western R.R. Co. The men responsible for the above change were Wm. Windom, Thomas Simpson, W. H. Yale, J. C. Easton, John Robson, Wm. M. Mitchell, H. W. Lamberton, M. G. Norton, E. S. Youmans, R. D. Cone, Thomas Wilson, M. H. Drew, E. D. Williams, G. P. Wilson, Thomas Abbott and Ignatious O'Farral, and this act authorized the building, equipment and operation of a railroad from Winona to the Iowa line East of Range 14 and West of the 5th principal meridian, and also granted the right to extend the line by the feasible route from Winona to St. Paul and Minneapolis, the road to be completed and equipped within 4 years from the date of the act.

A meeting of the incorporators was held at Winona April 16, 1872, and the following officers were elected: Wm. Mitchell, President; E. D. Williams, Vice President; Thomas Simpson, Secretary; and M. G. Norton, Treasurer. Wm. Mitchell, John Robson and H. W. Lamberton were the executive committee. E. S. Youmans, Ignatius O'Farrell and M. G. Norton were appointed commissioners to sell the stock of the company. The city of Winona on April 9, 1872, had a special election and voted bonds in the amount of $150,000, to aid in the construction of the road. Other towns in Winona county also voted liberal amounts. However, the financial crisis of 1873 and the hard times following prevented the building of the road and it still remained " a glorious possibility". In 1875 the company voted to accept a proposal of some Iowa interests to construct a narrow gage road from Hesper, Iowa to Houston, Minnesota proveded the company would build a similar road from Winona to Houston. However, nothing further came of the project except that of it being an idea.

The whole proposition lay formant until 1887 when the idea was again revived, more bonds were voted and sold and the ground breaking ceremony was held in the east end of the city near where the plant of Armour & Co., is located today. On August 11, 1888, the road was constructed southwesterly, then westerly, around Lake Winona, past Sugar Loaf towards Minnesota City, and parts of this old right of way are still visible today from the newly constructed highway 61 and 20 miles of rail had been laid before Christmas of that year. During 1889 the road had been completed to East Utica, a town about a mile east of the present town of Utica, and by December of 1890

the road had been put into operation as far as Spring Valley and was finally completed to Osage, Iowa, connecting with the Winona, Osage and S.W. in 1891. At this time H. W. Lamberton was President; Verazzano Simpson, father of Mrs. J. Russell Smith and Mrs. Dorothy Bailey, Vice President; and Thomas Simpson was Secretary and General counselor.

Again due to financial reverses in 1894, the W.S.W. went into receivership and reorganized as the Winona and Western; and in 1901 the entire line, which by now not only extended from Winona to Osage, Iowa, but from Simpson to Rochester as well, was sold to the Wisconsin, Minnesota and Pacific R.R. Co. Later this same year it was acquired by the Chicago and Great Western and has operated from Winona under that name ever since.

The first president of this company. A. B. Stickney, founded the now famous St. Paul Union Stock Yards and to this day that cattle and packing center is served exclusively by the Chicago & Great Western Road. It became known as the Corn Belt Road.

Many C.G.W. presidents have come and gone but hardly any are remembered. However, the road has had a full quota of men who worked for it in many capacities and achieved lasting fame at a later date in other fields. Among them Walter P. Chrysler, machinist, Locomotive Dept. later founded the Chrysler Corporation. F. B. Kellogg, author of the famous Kellogg Peace Pact to outlaw war, was an employee in the legal department. Charles H. Mayo, of the Mayo Clinic was a consulting surgeon. Ralph Budd, later President of the CBQ RR, was in its Engineering Dept. Charles G. Dawes, Vice President of the U. S. under Coolidge, as well as Sewell L. Avery, of Montgomery Ward & Co., have been members of its board of directors.

In 1889 the road was completed to East Utica about a mile east of Utica, connecting there with the W & STP, now C & NW. Dec. 30, 1890 the road was put in operation as far ar Spring Valley and a big excursion to Spring Valley was held on that day. At that time H. W. Lamberton was President. V. Simpson was V.P. and Thomas Simpson was Secretary and Attorney.

They still operate between Utica and Altura and the Trestle bridge at Bethany - a very interesting sight and one well worth visiting-is located a short distance south of the town of Bethany, Minnesota. This is a huge wooden trestle and is one of the few wooden trestles in use today.

In the early 1930's the CGW entered into an agreement with the CMW to operate from a point approximately 2 miles southwest of Eyota into Winona over their tracks. As a result of this agreement, the tracks were removed between Altura and Rollingstone in 1934--between Utica and Eyota in 1935, then Rollingstone to Gilmore in 1939, also between Gilmore and Sugar Loaf in same year and between Sugar Loaf and Winona yard in 1943.

CMSTP&R R.R.

This was one of the original land grant roads. By an act of the legislature the Minnesota and Pacific Ry. was created on May 22, 1857. It was empowered to construct a line from Winona up the Valley of the Mississippi River to St. Paul. The company graded 62 miles and received $600,000 in bonds. On March 2, 1867, the legislature authorized the directors to change the name of the company to the St. Paul & Chicago R.R. and this was done on March 19, 1867.

Work was begun on this line at or near St. Paul in 1865 but nothing was done in Winona County until 1870 when the road was built from Minnesota City to Weaver and put in operation by the CNW. In 1871 the roadbed was completed between St. Peter Jct. and St. Paul and in December of that year was sold to the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul R.R. who immediately took possession and began operating over C&NW rails to La Crosse, where it joined its rails from Milwaukee.

From the diary of Mr. Benjamin Jennings Moore...Mr. Moore a pioneer settler in southeastern Minnesota came to Minnesota in 1852 and helped lay out a townsite to be known as Richmond. He planned to build a home in Richmond and came to Winona and purchased lumber and other materials and floated them down the river to his landing site and tied the raft to shore.

The next morning the raft was missing and he finally overtook his raft at Dresbach, and as it would have been very difficult to get the raft back up the river he took the lumber ashore, purchased a piece of land, then built his house. The house was a few rods north of the present location of the Dresbach station. Mr. Moore related how wood was cut and sold to the steamboats by the cord for the price of $1.00 per cord and salt was sold at 30¢ a pound and the school teachers pay was $3.00 a week and "board yourself".

Mr. Moore also related that after the road was constructed on the west side of the Mississippi River in 1873 and prior to the building of a bridge across the river, that during summer months cars were ferried across and during winter months piling was driven through the ice and stringers, ties, and rails were laid upon the piling, the stringers being high enough above the ice for a team and wagon to be driven under, and trains moved over the temporary structure. And in the spring when the ice was no longer safe the tracks were removed.

Mrs. Ferdinand Baker, in the winter of the early seventies, kept a boarding house at Dakota when the first railroad was built. Mrs. Baker boasts that she helped to build the railroad and one is certain that her work did help in a very material way when she relates that with the aid of two faithful girls she cooked and baked for a group of 40 men during the winter not to mention the care of a family of five small children. The men slept in bunks in a lower part of the large building they lived in. Mrs. Baker did the cooking and never retired before midnight, and rising early to prepare a substantially good breakfast. As wood was the fuel used one can still imagine the amount of toil Mr. Baker must have done to provide enough for cooking and for heating the place.

Most of the Baker boys worked as telegraph operators for the railroad, some remaining in the employ of the railroad, others seeking other occupations. Mr. Baker died an accidental death in 1878 and later Mrs. Baker married Benjamin J. Moore, another pioneer. Mr. Moore owned land in Dresbach, on which the railroad was built, and once had a home very near the location of the tracks. To this union was born one child, George Moore, whose wife very kindly passed this information on to use. They are still residing in Dresbach.

Nathan Brown, the second settler in Winona County, landed at a point that is now known as the town of Dakota, on Sept. 29th, 1849. He erected a log building near the river landing and began to trade with the Indians. He named the village "Dacotah" after the Indian tribes by that name and it was later shortened to Dakota. In 1872 when the Milwaukee Railroad was built, Mr. Brown gave one and one half miles of the right away to the railroad company with the understanding that a railroad station would always be maintained in Dakota. He died February 8, 1905.

While James Doville was working on the grade in 1873 through the village of Richmond, they uncovered some giant skeletons of the Mound Builders of Indians. A scientist from St. Louis, who heard of the discovery, came to Richmond. Mr. Doville worked with him gathering up and helping sort the bones. He claimed it was a Mound Builder's cemetery. The bodies were buried separately and in regular rows. Two giant skeletons were from seven to eight feet long, their jaws at the wide part being from seven to eight inches across. Besides stone hammers, flint spear heads and arrow points they found a piece of hard copper of diamond shape with sharp corners. It was 1/8 of an inch thick and 6 inches long. Where it came from and what it could have been used for was not known.

Thomas A. Fraser, a Civil Engineer, was engaged to survey the CM.St.P&P through Winona and was surveying this route in November of 1876. He was the father of James Earle Fraser, famed American sculptor, who was born in Winona, November 4, 1876, and was the sculptor for the $275,000 Memorial to the famed Drs. William and Charles Mayo, that was placed in the Mayo Memorial Park, Rochester, Minnesota. Mr. Fraser used Indians as models for his statue, "The End of the Trail" and for the Indian head on the buffalo nickel, which was his design, the head being the model of a famous old Sioux, Chief Iron Tail.

Edmund Rice, first President of the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad, became president of the Minnesota and Pacific Railroad in 1857. In 1862 by an act of the legislature this road was permitted to change its name to that of the St. Paul and Pacific. In May, 1881 Mr. Rice was elected mayor of St. Paul.

The road was extended from Winona to La Crescent in 1872. Passenger trains continued to operate over the CNW Bridge until 1875, but the freight trains operated via La Cresent being ferried over the river until the bridge across the river at this point was completed and put into use, then all trains operated via this route.

On September 18th, 1909, President Taft visited Winona and the presidential train was one hour late and necessitated a change in the public reception program at the Hotel Winona. A trip through the city in automobiles and around the lake was part of the program. He spoke later for a few minutes at the Philharmonic Hall.

CBQ

On April 9, 1886, the Chicago Burlington and Northern Railroad ran its first regular train from St. Paul to Prairie du Chien, passing Winona on the Wisconsin side of the river. The line from Grand Crossing to the Chippewa River was started March 1, 1886. A station was established at the east side of Winona, one half mile below the present station of that name, and a spur track built from the main line to the Wisconsin bank of the Mississippi River was completed in September of 1886. The company at once began to acquire land and right of way in Winona, and a winter bridge was soon put in operation. On Dec. 16, 1886, the first freight train was run and Mr. H. W. Lamberton shipped the first carload of flour over the bridge, thus establishing communication between Winona and the extensive lines of the new road. The first passenger train of this road was operated into Winona, over the C & N W Bridge on January 3, 1887. It is interesting to note that all of the four other railroads which served Winona at one time or another have used this bridge.

A building at the corner of Second and La Fayette Sts., was remodeled as a station and the road put in operation. For a time in 1886 passengers were taken from Winona across the river to East Winona on a ferry. That winter a winter bridge was built. The company put in a ferry of its own, ferrying trains from the spur on the Wisconsin side back to the Minnesota side. On July 4, 1891 the first train ran across the present draw bridge and conditions have remained the same except that on June 1st, 1899 the name of the Chicago Burlington & Northern was changed to that of the Chicago Burlington & Quincy.

The Winona Bridge Railroad Co., was originated under the general laws of Minnesota on July 10, 1890 with a capital stock of $400,00 for the purpose of constructing and putting into operation a line extending from the City of Winona in an easterly direction across the Mississippi River to the town of Buffalo in the state of Wisconsin. The stock was held by the Chicago Burlington and Northern and the Winona and South Western and the Green Bay andWestern and the Green Bay, Winona and St. Paul R.R.

The original officers were Matthew G. Norton, President, Joseph Walker, Jr., Vice President; Henry W. Weiss, Secretary; H. W. Lamberton, Treasurer. Among the directors were H. W. Lamberton, M. G. Norton and V. Simpson.

The plans for the building of the bridge took definite shape in the spring of 1888, when the matter was carefully considered by the directors of the Winona & Southwestern. The requisite act was passed by congress on August 13, 1888, authorizing the construction of a draw, or high bridge, in the railroad or combination railroad and wagon bridge and in 1889 the legislature of Wisconsin and Minnesota took the requisite action.

Plans were further developed in the spring of 1890. The W & S W directors turned over their interest in the project to the Winona Bridge Building Co., and work was started on the bridge August 1, 1890. It was completed in the late part of June, 1891, and the first train crossed on July 4, 1891.

While built for the use of the three lines mentioned, the bridge was to be open to use of any road that cared to operate over it. The tolls were fixed by the Secretary of War of the U. S. in case the companies could not agree. This was the first time such a provision was ever made for any bridge spanning the Mississippi River. When the line was completed the Burlington station of East Winona (Wis) was moved up half a mile from its old location to its present site, now called Winona Junction. The G B W continues the spur across the Burlington track to connect with its own line at Marshland.

Many changes have taken place since the railroad first started in Winona. Winona too, has changed. The lumber mills have moved to the Pacific Northwest and in their stead, numerous diversified types of industry have taken their place.

The Bay State Milling Co. is now the largest manufacturer of flour in the Northwest - the Froedtert Grain and Malting Co., successors of the Winona Malting Company have expanded and now have elevator storage of over one million bushels - the J. R. Watkins Co., rapidly has grown, now having plants and warehouses located in 13 different cities and their products are sold the world over -the Miller industries have expanded and Peerless Chain, too has grown. Other industries have come to Winona, among them the Northwest Co-operative Mills, manufacturers of fertilizers, Armour Fertilizer Co., and Swift and Company. The Winona Republican founded during November of 1855 is now the Winona Daily News;under the able management of Mr. Max White, it has grown until its daily circulation is over 21,000 and recently received a national award from the University of Wisconsin as the leading newspaper in cities of a population between 10,000 and 25,000, in the United States.

Only a few reminders of this period remain. In Woodlawn Cemetery, on the hillside to the west, overlooking the quiet little valley below, you will find a small marble monument that is well marked by the passing years and on it are these words: "Erected by the Officers and Employees of the Winona & St. Peter R.R. in Memory of Charles F. Everhart, Killed Oct. 10, 1864", and also are inscribed these words "We all loved him". It is not unusual to see and hear of fellow workers of the Railroad Fraternity, being generous or big hearted towards a brother worker, but it is most unusual for such a tribute to be given. Whoever this gentleman was is lost in the shadows of the past, for I cannot find anyone who can remember any person of this name or anything that he did to warrant this tribute, but whoever he was or whatever he did must have been outstanding. The burial records-therewere no death certificates or records of deaths kept here until 1872 - show this statement "Killed by the cars".

As one goes across the junction of the railroad tracks going to Prarie Island, if you look to the right just as you cross the tracks, you will see a small wooden building sitting on the ground, with one door in the center and two small windows on the sides. If you stop, walk over and give it a close inspection you can make out the words that were once printed on its side "The Winona and St. Peter R. R. " and on the same side the number, No. 30 - Inasmuch as the W & St. P, according to legend, purchased second hand equipment when it was first started and it was brought to Winona by river boats, no doubt this box car is celebrating its centennial also.

This roughly covers a century of railroading in Winona County. Gone are the days of handbrakes, operated by men on top of cars and often when the brake chains broke a man fell between the cars frequently losing his life or limbs and Stockton Hill has taken its toll; - gone are link couplers that maimed many a hand or arm. And it was these two things that were the reason one would see so many men guarding crossings, (before automatic gates were installed,) who had only one arm or limped account an artificial leg.

In their place are air and electric brakes - automatic couplers - steel rails have replaced the steel strapping placed on wooden under-structures that were first used as rails - box cars and passenger coaches are of steel construction instead of wood - the more efficient diesel engines have replaced the steam locomotives.

However, if one will stand by the present yard office, during some warm summer evening at twilight when the fog begins to gently glide in from the river and silently wraps its shrouded arms around the area, in fancy one can still see the camp fires of the Indian village and hear the voice of Chief Wabasha as he councels his braves - you can see Mr. Sanborn nervously pace the station platform as he waits for the train to arrive in order to ask the crew what happened on their run from Waseca - you can hear the wires hum as Mr. Cosgrave burns the wires as he sends his orders - the voice of Mr. Norris as he admonishes the engine hostler to be careful with his engine - Mr. Gage as he strolls down the coach aisles, cheerfully telling the passengers that they will soon arrive at Winona - the long low Who-oo-oo Who-oo-oo of the engine as it glides down Stockton Hill - the voice of Frank M. Cassidy, Yardmaster recently deceased, known affectionately to the men as the "Iron-Duke," as he shouts instructions to the switchmen and see him when he turns to explain to Mr. Jay L. Christopher and E. J. Carland, both now retired, why an indnstry was not switched, and then Mr. E. J. Brose and R. F. Schwab, who succeeded Mr. Cassidy and Mr. Christopher, who are also now retired, as they discussed their problem - and then the fog drifts away and you know what you have just seen was in fancy.

These were the days of early railroading. Working conditions are much more pleasant and easier now but it is still hard work and in many departments the hours at times are still long, but the same spirit is still imbedded deep in those who work at this occupation and they are just as big-hearted and kind as those of the past and I know that each and everyone of us have a deep feeling for our work and hope that perhaps, some day, some one will speak of us, as did Mr. F. R. Peachin, general superintendent, St. Paul, Minnesota, when he wrote Mr, Gage on May 3, 1921, which in part was as follows:

"It is to be regretted that men, such as you have been in Railway service, must eventually reach that point which sooner or later comes to us all, when your work is turned over to a following generation to carry on. We can only hope they will do as well as you have done in the performance of their duties; and that you may be spared for many years to enjoy the rest and pleasures due you and that it will fully compensate you for the sacrifices of pleasure in the past and for the faithful, concientious performance of a life's work."